294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
525 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[39] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[39] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not
appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "leǧä säräd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



561 The functions of the young literally follow these
882 terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkar", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

539 "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she
565 has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



212 857 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or [524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?

( Reply) Udder of female donkey;

(Question) What is four?

(Reply) Udder of cow."

[98] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[[71]] Footnote 79: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).
"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".
"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "k̈oramsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "k̈obäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "k̈obäle" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalshal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw abebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temq̈at" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

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883 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their
526 own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasized over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" boasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "gonjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming out, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responsibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gäräd". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

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but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eṣhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

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to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

## COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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836 peers with the insulting term *šĭlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age
582 of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On
[832] the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭĭmqat, the girl may make some effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair,
[584] and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

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hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more complex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing

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be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

## ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

### *The Welfare School*

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

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*883 892 873 178 they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

* 883 893 At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-betweens, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

* 883 • 882 873 178 Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

*883 882 178 These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

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cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

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* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents.

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parents who may have objected to their children's spending so many years in elementary school are not a little proud to have them in so prestigious an institution, and are delighted to have them so well financed by the Ministry of Education.

Needless to say, the students who make the grade into one of the secondary schools are jubilant. The relative hardship of their elementary years gives way to an easy and stimulating life. For those who grew up in provincial schools, the move to Addis Ababa has been an especially exciting prospect—so much so that when secondary schools were newly established in some of the provincial capitals in the late 1950's, a number of students who were supposed to attend them preferred to stop their education instead.[18]

The pattern of adolescence embodied in the government schools differs from that in traditional Amhara society in two fundamental respects. In the traditional pattern, adolescence is a time when the Amhara are subjected to the strictest controls by their parents. At the same time, they are expected to prepare for independence by assuming increasing amounts of responsibility. In the modern pattern, the welfare school has the effect of removing the student as far as possible from parental controls. At the same time, it puts him in a more passive and irresponsible role than ever. He is given virtually everything he needs and obliged to do nothing in return. He is asked only to prepare himself to serve his country well later on. This obligation is in fact firmly implanted in the minds of many students, who acquire the sense of a personal debt to the government which they want to repay in later years. Ethiopian society is not yet organized, however, in a way that will bring such motives to realistic expression. During and after his school experience, little opportunity is provided for the student to mature out of an essentially passive, receptive, dependent posture. Critical of this state of affairs, one Ethiopian college student was moved to declare in an oratorical contest: "Ethiopian students are like college students the world over, with two differences—they get everything free, and their selfishness is pushed to frightening exaggeration."

Be that as it may, modern adolescence in Ethiopia does provide the essential minimal conditions for fulfilling its function. It is a moratorium for the young, in which relative freedom from traditional controls and a relatively carefree existence facilitate the acquisition of habits, beliefs, and values which their fathers never knew.*

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* The above description applies only until 1961–62, after which secondary students no longer received room and board or stipends and Addis Ababa College students were no longer housed in dormitories. Some implications of this change are considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

| Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice | Secondary School | | College Males (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males (per cent) | Females (per cent) | |
| *Of parents:* | | | |
| Always | 46 | 35 | 17 |
| Usually | 43 | 60 | 65 |
| Not often | 11 | 5 | 18 |
| *Of friends:* | | | |
| Always | 19 | 8 | 8 |
| Usually | 47 | 61 | 53 |
| Not often | 34 | 31 | 39 |
| Number | (396) | (40) | (197) |

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

### *Preparation for Work*

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5



So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

*Religion.*—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

*In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5



permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

*Kinship*

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [859]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [704] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]